

## Southern Appalachian Creature Feature Podcasts

### Grazing goats help with bog conservation

Greetings and welcome to the Southern Appalachian Creature Feature.

Mountain sweet pitcher plant is an endangered plant found in Southern Appalachian bogs, one of our rarest natural communities. Bog turtles are North America's smallest turtle and are also an imperiled species found in Southern Appalachian bogs.

Aside from both being imperiled; aside from both living in bogs; one thing these two species have in common is they prefer areas with plenty of sunshine.

When woody shrubs like privet and blackberry begin to grow in a bog, shading out grasses and sedges, it begins to spell trouble to these species. Woody shrubs are followed by trees like maple and alder and the nature of the bog is fundamentally changed and two rare species lose habitat. The challenge for land managers is how to keep those woody species out and keep the sunshine in.

One novel solution being used by The Nature Conservancy – goats. The expectation is that the goats' voracious appetite will help keep woody plants in check and keep the sun shining on the pitcher plants. The use of livestock to keep plants in check is not unprecedented. In the Southern Appalachians an experiment is underway on Roan Mountain to gauge goats' ability to help maintain the expansive grassy balds, and livestock have also been used to maintain grassy areas like historic battlefields and even utility rights of way.

For WNCW and the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, this is Gary Peeples.